Nova Scotia Player Card Research Project

Stage I Research Report

FINAL

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary 1

Conclusions 7

Recommendations 10

Background 12

Player Segmentation Background 16

Summary of Panelist Participation 18

Use of the Card System 23

Usability Assessment: Ratings of Card System & Features 26

Evaluation of the Available Features 33

Setting and Hitting Limits 37

Experiences with the RGD 39

Registration for Stage III 42

VLT Play of Concern 48

Appendix A: Orientation Survey 49
Appendix B: Follow-up Survey 52
Appendix C: Final Survey 56
Appendix D: Focus Group Discussion Guides 62

Executive Summary

This report includes the findings from the first of a four-stage research process designed to evaluate an RGD (Responsible Gaming Device). The RGD is a card-based system that allows the cardholder to track their VLT play and to set various limits on their play.

The first and third stages involve extensive field-based research and data collection. In Stage I, the initial research stage, all VLTs in the Windsor and Mount Uniacke area (10 sites with 70 VLTs) were fitted with RGDs beginning in April 2005, were active by early May, and each remained operational until the end of July.

This report contains findings from several pieces of research, including surveys, focus groups and playing data from approximately 121 panelists who agreed to participate in the research project for two to three months. In that time, panelists agreed to use the card whenever they played VLTs in the Windsor area and agreed to participate in several short surveys. Just under half of the panelists were also invited to participate in focus groups. One additional focus group was held with owners/managers and senior staff from the 10 sites participating in the test.

The first stage of the research was designed to access the usability and functionality of the RGD rather than its effectiveness in actually changing playing behaviors. Stage III of the research will include mandatory card use for anyone using VLTs in the Windsor area for a six-month period beginning in October 2005. It is during this stage of the project that actual changes in play behaviour, and hence the effectiveness of the tool, will be assessed.

It is important to note that an ethics review of the Stage III research approach will occur prior to implementation to ensure that the research is conducted to the highest level of ethical standards. Omnifacts Bristol, as lead investigator on this project is currently proceeding with the ethics review utilizing a review board made up of pre-eminent experts in the field of gaming research, and participants in ethics review processes using the standard Tri-Council Policy Guidelines for research ethics.

Overall Research Objectives and Results: Stage I

This stage primarily focused on the usability or functionality of the RGD: determining whether it was easily used, intuitive and perceived by the player to be helpful/useful in

encouraging responsible play. In essence, this stage aimed at building on the pre-field research conducted by NSGC by moving it into a 'real life' setting.

Also, it is important to assess whether there are any unintended outcomes or potential unintended outcomes from implementing this RGD in a live setting, and Stage I provided the first opportunity to do this.

The outcomes of this stage will be utilized to modify the RGD, the research approach, and required registration process, leading to a modified and optimized RGD to be used in the next data collection stage of this project (i.e., Stage III).

The specific objectives of Stage I and research results are noted below:

Research Objective #1: provide NSGC and Techlink with additional information with respect to the usability of the device (from the player perspective), leading to further refinements to the interface screens, available features, etc. prior to moving into the more critical research stage;

Stage I Results:

Over 70% of respondents to the Final Survey gave ratings of 8 or higher for the system being useful for themselves personally and for other VL players – almost 90% felt the system was easy to use.

Approximately one half of the focus group participants found the RGD system to be useful. Several commented that it was an "eye opener" and helped them realize how much money they were spending on VLTs. Several people (particularly less frequent players) felt they were already playing with a budget and they knew how much they were spending without the card. Others (particularly the more frequent players) felt it was not useful unless it was mandatory because now they could play without the card or simply take the card out when they hit limits.

The lowest ratings of the card system (63% giving 8 or higher) was for the system reading the card when first inserted and, as was clearly noted from the focus groups, this was more of an issue for those with the higher Problem Gambling Severity Index (PGSI) scores (and typically the more frequent play). Details on the PGSI classifications are provided on page 16. In this case, only 45% of those in the highest category gave a rating of 8 or more. The speed of the system was given an 8 or higher by just over 70% of the panelists.

Focus group participants in the highest PGSI group in particular noted serious complaints about accessing the system itself. They commented on having to insert their card multiple times before it was read to allow them to play and commented it might occur as many as 8 out of 10 visits. This caused them to give up frequently and play without using the card.

In terms of features, the My Account feature (87%) and the My Money Limit (also 87%) were the two features most frequently mentioned (in terms of use) on the Final Survey. Just over half (52%) said they used the Play Limit feature and 15% also mentioned using the 48-Hour Stop button.

Ratings of usefulness for each of the features are quite high with the lowest, the 48-Hour Stop, being considered useful by three-quarters of those who used it or 11% of the total. When asked which feature was most useful, responses were split between My Account at 46% and My Money Limit at 43%.

Research Objective #2: assess the receptiveness of the card usage amongst participants and identify any potential unintended outcomes as a result of the technology, such as:

a. an increase in player spending as a result of using the device;
b. an increase in loss "chasing" by some players as a result of being able to now clearly see how much they've spent over time or during a play session;
c. any negative emotional or physiological reactions by players as a result of being forced off the VLT once a self-imposed limit on spending has been reached (i.e., what will the player now do?); and,

Stage I Results:

According to the Final Survey, there is strong support (56% strongly and 31% support) for having player cards mandatory for anyone wanting to play VLTs in Nova Scotia and this support was generally consistent across all PGSI categories.

Over 90% of the panelists suggest they will get a card when it is mandatory for play and a similar number said they would recommend a card to other VLT players.

Of those who had used the My Money Limit feature (53 people in the Final Survey), 68% said they had reached that limit at some point. Sixty-one percent (or 22 respondents) of those who set and then hit a money limit said they stopped playing. Forty-four percent (or

16 respondents) said they removed their card and kept playing, which itself was an important finding in terms of assessing whether a more mandatory card usage approach would ultimately be required.

With respect to unintended outcomes, Stage I produced limited negative findings relating to loss chasing or increased spending as a result of using the device. Only 3% (one person with a PGSI of 0 or 1 and one person in the 8 or higher category) said the RGD encouraged them to spend more money. Survey participants were not asked to explain the reason why the RGD system encouraged them to spend more money, and the issue did not arise in focus group discussions when participants were asked to report on whether or not they discovered anything interesting or bothersome about their play while using the card system.

Research Objective #3: assess player (and retailer) attitudes and opinions related to the RGD and its potential to encourage responsible play (e.g., helping players set spend budgets, stick to spend budgets, etc). An assessment of potential player registration processes will also be conducted in advance of the next data collection stage to ensure that the planned approach is in fact feasible and generally acceptable to retailers (assuming they will be involved in implementing it) and players.

Stage I Results:

According to results from the Final Survey, just over 80% of card users felt the system encouraged them to play more responsibly and three-quarters felt it encouraged responsible play in others.

Approximately 80% gave high ratings for the RGD being helpful in setting and sticking to budgets on the Final Survey.

The following provides summary assessments of the (a) enrollment options, (b) the RGD itself, and (c) the available features:

A. Assessment of Enrollment

Survey results and focus group findings indicate that the panelists strongly support (56% of respondents from the Final Survey strongly support and 31% support) having player cards mandatory for anyone wanting to play VLTs in Nova Scotia moving to the next stage of research and making cards mandatory for anyone wanting to play VLTs (in Nova Scotia). Evaluations of their experiences with the system are positive with most agreeing

the system helps them and others play more responsibly, that they are spending less money, and feel safer when playing.

Based on the focus group conducted with retailers and staff, it is evident that retailers in the Windsor area are not enthusiastic since the test is only happening in their area, they feel their business (VLT, food and beverage) will be negatively impacted, and they might lose customers who will not return. They also do not believe they should have a role in the initial registration of those wanting cards.

The concept of one card for one player and a reasonable level of security to ensure someone cannot easily have additional cards is well understood and a requirement of the registration process. However, there is also considerable concern about privacy of information and gaming habits being traced to a particular person.

The Final Survey suggests that over 80% of panelists are willing to provide some personal information from a driver's license to obtain a card if that information is deleted and the vast majority (80%) suggest they will get a card. Some more opposition should be expected in reality because in the focus groups (where the option could be considered and discussed more) there were more reservations and because the geographic area of the test is still limited and people can still conveniently avoid machines with RGDs.

B. Assessment of RGD

Ratings of the RGD for ease of use, encouraging responsible play for the player and for others, and helping set a budget were all positive with approximately three quarters of the panelists giving ratings of 8 or higher for each attribute. The lowest rating (6 in 10 giving a rating of 8 or higher) was for the system reading the player's card. This technical issue has to be addressed and solved before the cards are mandatory. It was a minor annoyance to less frequent players, but very annoying to those playing more frequently, some of whom simply removed their cards and kept playing, which will not be possible in Stage III.

Other issues of some concern relate to the pop-up responsible gaming questions and understanding of setting spending limits.

The pop-up questions themselves are an annoyance particularly for the more frequent players, but of even more concern is the attention attracted by the accompanying noise as they pop on the screen.

With respect to the understanding of spending limits, some communications assistance should be provided to clarify how these features work and to help players set limits. Some are setting higher budgets than they want to play (or not setting any at all) so they do not hit it, some are avoiding cashing in the belief they will not be permitted to put their money back in, and some feel their winnings are being added to their budget. The concern that the system is not useful because players can simply remove their card and continue should not be an issue in the next stage.

C. Available Features

Ratings of each of the specific features offered on the RGD were quite high with three quarters of panelists or more giving a rating of 8 or higher. My Account and My Money Limits were both the most used and considered the most useful, but panelists did see valid uses for My Play Limits and the 48-Hour Stop and these were highly rated as well. Those using the system consider the current features useful and there also does not seem to be any gaps or a need for other features that are not on the system. The only real concern about features was one of privacy with some worried that others who are standing nearby will see their information on the screen.

Setting spending limits is helping some people. Fifty-three people had set a money limit at some point, the majority had reached one of their limits and most of them said they stopped playing. Those who said they took their card out and kept playing when they reached their limit will not be able to do that in the next stage if they choose to set a spending limit.

Conclusions

1. **There are technical issues that must be addressed before the next stage. These relate to cards being read and PINs being recognized by the device**

Since the objectives of Stage I focused on functionality of the device, under a mandatory system, it is not acceptable to have players trying several times to have their card read. This was a serious issue, particularly with the more frequent players, that caused many people to give up and simply play without their cards.

2. **Players who either never used the card system or those who used it and then stopped sometime during the study period evaluated the RGD as positively as those who used the card system throughout the study period.**

Comparison of non-users, users who stopped, and users who used the card system throughout the study period for the questions that were asked of all participants (regardless of whether or not they used the card system) in the Final Survey showed that continued use of the card system did not skew responses to be more positive. In fact, non-users and users who stopped using the card system were slightly more positive regarding making the cards mandatory, establishing pre-set spending limits and providing personal information in the registration process.

3. **The features on the system are both helpful, easy to use and are perceived to encourage responsible play.**

Ratings of the various features were quite high and even features that were not used much were seen as useful in certain circumstances. In addition, there were no obvious gaps in the features offered with panelists wanting features or functionality that was not present. There are still some concerns with privacy and not wanting others in the immediate area to be able to see what is on the RGD screen.

4. **The pop-up trivia questions do not appear to be achieving their intended outcome.**

The more frequent players in particular, were annoyed by the questions and, in many cases, did not even look at them before providing an answer. Of even more concern was the noise accompanying the questions which attracted unwanted attention from other people in the area.

5. **Participants recognize the need for one card to one person, but still want the process to be convenient and fast - approximately 5 minutes.**

The process should not discourage casual/light players to not play, nor should it move heavier players to other venues. Having registration available in bars was expected yet most agreed that bar staff would not be able to manage the initial process. A self-serve option was liked, as was having the registration available at Lotto booths.

6. **The reason for needing some personal information from those wanting a card should be explained (to ensure one card for one person).**

There is great concern about privacy of personal information and a common disbelief that information that is said to be deleted, really is. Common examples of deleting an email or a file on a computer and then being able to retrieve it were given in support of this disbelief.

7. **Expect more opposition to the registration process than is evident from the survey**

When the biometrics and driver's license registration options were discussed in the focus groups, the biometrics registration option was preferred because not everyone has a driver's license and because the thumbprint is seen as having less personal information attached to it. Because the biometrics option was not technically feasible for Stage III, only the idea of providing personal information from a driver's licence was presented in the Final Survey. Support for this idea was high, with the understanding that the information would be deleted once the card was issued. However, in the mandatory setting in Stage III, where discussion can take place (as was the case in the focus groups) more opposition should be expected.

8. **Retailers do not want to be involved with the enrollment process and feel they should be compensated for their participation in the test.**

In the retail focus group, they cited a loss of business (VL and other), the fact that the test is only occurring in their area and the sentiment that their staff is already busy.

9. As the test moves to the next stage with everyone who wants to play VLTs in the Windsor area requiring a card, there may be an increase in demand for problem gambling services.

During each survey, panelists were asked if the card system had made them aware of anything about their VLT play that was bothering them and approximately 30% said it had. During the survey process, players were asked if they would like additional problem gambling support information or if they would like to be put in contact with an appropriate support professional. Once card usage is mandatory in Stage III, more players may realize they need support. Therefore, these services should be incorporated in the next stage as well.

Recommendations

1. **Under the condition that the technical issues with the card reader are addressed, the testing should move to Stage III with mandatory cards for everyone who wants to play VLTs in the Windsor area recognizing a need for one card per player.**

Panelists agree the card is useful and should move to a mandatory system. Over 70% of the respondents to the Final Survey gave ratings of 8 or higher for the system being useful for them and for other VL players, while 56% of respondents strongly support and 31% support having player cards mandatory for anyone wanting to play VLTs in Nova Scotia. This support was generally consistent across all PGSI categories. In addition, panelists understood the need for one card per player; 69% of respondents to the Final Survey strongly support and an additional 27% support ensuring that each player only be allowed to have one card at a time.

Aside from the issue of the initial reading of the card, the device operated as it should and panelists rated it highly. For example, over 90% agreed the system helps them play more responsibly. Some of the issues surrounding being able to continue playing without the card will be addressed in Stage III when card use is mandatory.

Siteholders are quite reluctant to move to the next stage as they feel they will lose business since the system is only in place in their area. Siteholders recognize that the impact on their business will be more than simply their VLT revenue; beverage and food sales may be impacted as well, with the possible loss of customers to the competition.

2. **With the exception of the responsible gaming pop-up questions noted in the next point, the features examined in Stage I should be maintained and further assessed in Stage III. The pop-up questions should be removed as should the sounds that indicate a person has opened a particular screen.**

The pop-up questions are not achieving anything except attracting unwanted attention to those playing VLTs. If the objective is to force a break in play, another method to do so should be found.

3. **There is a need to provide advice or communications designed to help cardholders set a limit and understand what that limit should be for them as well as what happens when the limit is reached.**

The process involved for setting dollar limits is not completely understood by players. One or two mentioned that they were avoiding cashing out when they had won some

money because they thought they could not put the amount they had originally set as a budget back into the machine.

Others are setting limits that allow for some "padding" in case they want to play more and others believe their wins are being added to their budget. In all cases, these are small numbers of people, but it does reinforce the need to offer some help or advice on how to set a limit, how that limit will work, and what happens if the limit is reached.

4. **There is also a need to provide advice and communications about the device, how it can be used and why it might be useful to encourage enrollment and use of the features. This would build the necessary trust of the enrollment process and also explain the need for one card for one person.**

Part of the reason for the positive ratings of the system for being easy to use may be related to the training provided to panelists as they agreed to the research in Stage I. This training included how to use the device and its features with questions answered in a group setting. If the device is simply made available in October without someone to help with demonstrations and questions, more confusion and less overall use, trust, and satisfaction should be expected.

5. **Communication about the device and its uses can be limited to the VLT retail environment and should occur before the cards are mandatory, possibly two to four weeks before.**

Since the cards and the registration process are intended for those who want to play VLTs, communication about the process can be limited to areas that have the machines. Focus group participants said that pre-registration should preferably occur up to a month in advance of Stage III.

Background

This report is based on the first stage of a four-stage initiative designed to evaluate a RGD (Responsible Gaming Device) developed by Techlink Entertainment International from Sydney, Nova Scotia. The research will assess whether the use of a player card and the available RGD features- the account summary, the spending limits and the play limits (i.e., self-exclusion) - provide effective play management tools for VLT players.

In this initial field research stage, all VLTs in the Windsor and Mount Uniacke area (10 sites; 70 VLTs) were each fitted with the RGD (a total of 70 RGDs). The RGD is a card-based system that allows the holder of the card to keep track of their VLT play as well as set limits on the expenditures they make. A panel of 121 monthly VLT players were recruited for the research portion of Stage I. They voluntarily agreed to use the card each time they played VLTs and to be both surveyed and possibly included in focus groups to assess their experiences during the study. Some attrition was expected during the study and it was hoped that we would have approximately 100 panelists available throughout the study.

The panelists each received $50 in gift certificates of their choice (supermarket or shopping mall) for each survey completed, up to $150 in three gift certificates. Those who attended the focus group received a fourth certificate bringing their total to a possible $200. It is normal research industry practice to provide honorariums to participants in research - $50 is a typical amount for participation in a single focus group and these incentives were set after consideration that participants would be involved in three surveys and possibly a focus group as well as their ongoing commitment to use their card when playing.

It was critical to provide these honorariums in this study to reduce the likelihood of attrition, given the length of the study and the amount of feedback required from participants. Consideration was given to the fact that this study involved higher-risk players (but not players currently in treatment for gambling problems) resulting in the decision to provide gift certificates in lieu of cash incentives so as to minimize the risk that these funds would simply be used to play VLTs.

It was made quite clear to panelists at the onset, and on several subsequent occasions verbally and in writing that they should use the card when they played, but that they should not feel any obligation to play. Use of the card was voluntary at this stage – players not taking part in the research for this first stage could play VLTs without using a card or the RGD itself and panelists could also remove their cards and continue playing.

The player could also use the card without setting any limits and it would simply track play behaviours.

The first stage was designed to assess the usability or functionality of the RGD: determining whether it is easily used, intuitive and perceived by the player to be helpful/useful in encouraging responsible play. Also, it was important to assess whether there were any unintended outcomes or potential unintended outcomes from implementing this RGD in a live setting. Because the duration of the stage was only two months and because it was possible to play without using the cards, this stage was not designed to measure behaviour change. Since players were not obligated to use the card system, all panelists were asked to evaluate the card system, in general, while only those who used the system were asked to evaluate the features.

The specific research objectives for Stage I were as follows:

1. provide NSGC and Techlink with additional information with respect to the usability of the device (from the player perspective), leading to further refinements to the interface screens, available features, etc. prior to moving into the more critical research stage;

2. assess the receptiveness of the card usage amongst participants and identify any potential unintended outcomes as a result of the technology, such as:

    a. an increase in player spending as a result of using the device;
    b. an increase in loss "chasing" by some players as a result of being able to now clearly see how much they've spent over time or during a play session;
    c. any negative emotional or physiological reactions by players as a result of being forced off the VLT once a self-imposed limit on spending has been reached (i.e., what will the player now do?); and,

3. assess player (and retailer) attitudes and opinions related to the RGD, its user-friendliness, and its potential to encourage responsible play (e.g., helping players set spend budgets, stick to spend budgets, etc). An assessment of potential player registration processes will also be conducted in advance of the next data collection stage to ensure that the planned approach is in fact feasible and generally acceptable to retailers (assuming they will be involved in implementing it) and players.

The outcomes of this stage will be utilized to modify the RGD, the research approach, and required registration process, leading to a modified and optimized RGD to be used in the next data collection stage of this project (i.e., Stage III).

The first RGD was installed on April 18th, 2005 and became operational on April 19th. All RGDs were fitted and operational by the 3rd of May. Because all of the devices were not available until early May, the data considered for this analysis was taken from May 1st until July 2nd (9 full weeks). Data for this stage came from several sources as follows:

- The **card system** itself, which tracked expenditures and features used.
- The **Orientation Survey**, which followed the RGD training and was used to gather information on initial impressions of the RGD as well as to classify panelists based on their responses to the PGSI (Problem Gambling Severity Index) portion of the CPGI (Canadian Problem Gambling Index). A copy of the Orientation Survey is included as Appendix A.
- The **Follow-up Survey**, which was conducted approximately one month after panelists started to use their cards. This survey focused on evaluating the system from an ease of use and usefulness perspective. A copy of this survey is included as Appendix B.
- The **Final Survey**, which was conducted in early July, following the end of the stage. This survey also asked about ease of use, usefulness and evaluated options for the next stage of the project. A copy of this survey is included as Appendix C.
- **Focus Groups** with Panelists and Siteholders, which were conducted in June to provide more depth of information as well as to discuss options for the next stage. The discussion guide used for this research is included as Appendix D.

On June 27th and 28th, 2005 five focus group sessions were held in Windsor as part of the evaluation of the RGD. Four sessions were held with panelists who had been part of the study since its inception in April and the final session was held with owner/managers or senior staff from the sites with the RGDs installed. The site-holder group was specifically recruited for this session and had not been involved in any previous research.

The four panelist sessions were divided by PGSI score with those scoring 0 or 1 in the first session, 2 and 3 in the second, 4 to 7 in the third and 8 to 20 in the final. The Problem Gambling Severity Index is outlined on pages sixteen and seventeen of this report. The purpose of the groups was two-fold. In all sessions, the discussion was used to evaluate two possible means for registering those wanting cards in the next stage of the research. In addition (mainly with the panelists), there was much discussion about how useful the system was and what their experiences had been with it so far. This discussion-

based research will assist greatly with the interpretation of the survey results as it adds great depth of understanding and it is integrated into the following report.

Omnifacts Bristol also considered information by siteholder on their average weekly VLT sales during the test period and for several months preceding the test. While there is considerable volatility in the sales levels, there does not seem to be an overall negative impact on the sales in the Windsor/Mount Uniacke area during the nine-week test period based upon information collected by Atlantic Lottery Corporation. This finding is not unexpected given that it was a small research sample and players did not necessarily have to use their player card. Assessing potential revenue implications will become more important and telling during Stage III of the research.

Player Segmentation Background

In September 1996, a group of various professionals convened to deliberate on problem gambling research, treatment, and prevention in Canada. One of the goals of this deliberation was to create and validate an instrument to be used in epidemiological health studies of problem gambling in the general population. The instrument that resulted from this three-year national research project is called the Canadian Problem Gambling Index (CPGI).

The CPGI, a 31-item questionnaire, was designed for the purpose of distinguishing between respondents who have gambling problems and those who do not, and between gamblers who are at a low or moderate risk of developing problems. Within the CPGI, nine items comprise a sub-scale known as the Problem Gambling Severity Index (PGSI). The PGSI distinguishes four gambler sub-types, namely: non-problem, low risk, moderate risk, and problem. The non-problem group is further divided into gamblers and non-gamblers, as these sub-types are known to display different characteristics (Smith, G. J. & Wynne, H. J., 2002)[1]

Tabulation of the nine PGSI items is as follows: a score of 1 for each response of "sometimes," a score of 2 for each response of "most of the time," and a score of 3 for each "almost always" response. A respondent's index can range from 0 to 27 and the cut-off points for each gambler sub-type are as follows: 0 = non-problem gambler; 1-2 = low risk gambler; 3-7 = moderate risk gambler; and 8 or higher = problem gambler.

Much of the analysis in this report is based on the classification of respondents based on their responses to the PGSI questions from the CPGI. These questions were included with the Orientation Survey administered when panelists were shown how to access and use the RGD. Non-players were not included in this research as all participants were monthly players of VLTs when they started the research.

[1] Smith, G. J. & Wynne, H. J. (2002). Measuring Gambling and Problem Gambling in Alberta: Using the Canadian Problem Gambling Index (CPGI). Prepared by the Alberta Gaming Research Institute.

TABLE 1: Description of Gambler Sub-Types

PGSI Score	Gambler Sub-Type	Description
0	Non gambler	Respondents in this group have not gambled at all in the past 12 months so will skip through the majority of the questionnaire.
0	Non-problem gambler	Respondents in this group will have responded "never" to most of the behavioural problem indicators. This group will most likely not have experienced any adverse consequences of gambling.
1-2	Low-risk gambler	Respondents in this group will have responded "never" to most of the indicators of behavioural problems, but will have one or more "sometimes" or "more often" responses. This group likely will not have experienced any adverse consequences from gambling.
3-7	Moderate-risk gambler	Respondents in this group will have responded "never" to most of the indicators of behavioural problems, but will have one or more "most of the time" or "always" responses. This group may or may not have experienced adverse consequences from gambling.
8 and over	Problem gambler	Respondents in this group are those who have experienced adverse consequences from their gambling, and may have lost control of their behaviour. Involvement in gambling can be at any level, but is likely to be heavy.

[2] Smith, G.J. & Wynne, H. J. (2002)

[2] Smith, G. J. & Wynne, H. J. (2002). Measuring Gambling and Problem Gambling in Alberta: Using the Canadian Problem Gambling Index (CPGI). Prepared by the Alberta Gaming Research Institute.

Summary of Panelist Participation

The panel consisted of 121 Video Lottery players with a range of lifestyles and playing habits.

Panel participants were recruited in bars in Windsor and Mount Uniacke that operate Video Lottery Terminals. Bar patrons both in the vicinity of the VL machines and in other areas of the bar were approached and taken through a screening process to determine their level of VL play, gather initial demographics and outline the commitments required for participation. Only those who played at least monthly, those who were willing to commit to using the card every time they play, and those who agreed to complete 3 surveys and possibly participate in a focus group were recruited. No particular "type" of player was targeted to participate in the study.

Demographic information, PGSI classification, and initial impressions of the card system were obtained in the initial Orientation Survey.

The reader is cautioned that comparisons of results within or across categories are to be viewed as directional only. NOTE THE SMALL N-VALUES IN TABLE 2.

TABLE 2: Profile of Panel Participants

		Total	PGSI Category			
			Non-Problem	Low -Risk	Moderate-Risk	Problem
Total (n)		121	14	13	49	45
Gender	Male	36%	36%	31%	39%	36%
	Female	64%	64%	69%	61%	64%
Age	19 – 35 yrs old	23%	7%	23%	31%	20%
	36 – 50 yrs old	35%	36%	38%	27%	42%
	Over 50 yrs old	42%	57%	38%	38%	38%
Employment Status	Employed by company/organization, or self-employed	60%	57%	46%	61%	64%
	Retired, or not employed and not looking	27%	42%	31%	29%	20%
	Not employed and looking for work	9%	0%	8%	8%	13%
	Student	3%	0%	15%	2%	2%
Education	Less than H. School	22%	14%	23%	24%	22%
	Graduated H. School	35%	36%	31%	31%	40%
	Some or Graduated Trade School	35%	50%	46%	28%	34%
	Some or Graduated University	8%	0%	0%	16%	4%
Income	$25,000 or less	42%	33%	46%	35%	51%
	$25,001 - $50,000	37%	25%	23%	45%	36%
	$50,001 or more	22%	41%	31%	20%	13%
Frequency of Play	Once or more per week	72%	57%	61%	59%	91%
	Less than once per week	28%	35%	39%	40%	9%
	Don't Know	1%	7%	0%	0%	0%

Source: Orientation Survey Results

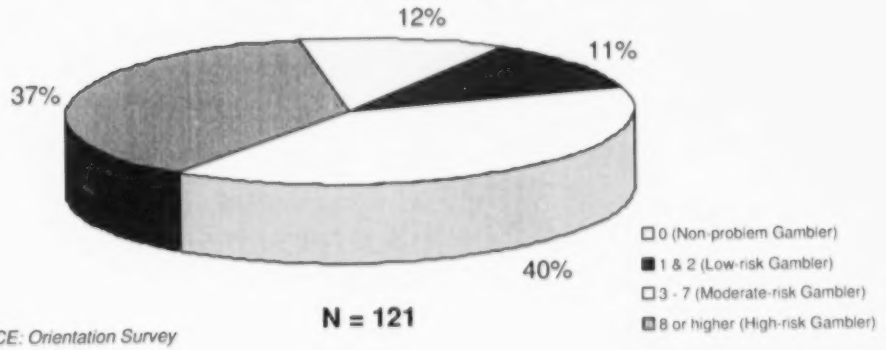
All panelists were segmented according to their answers to the nine Problem Gambling Severity Index questions. As shown in the following diagram, the majority (77%) of the panelists in this study have scores of 3 or higher, or are moderate- to problem gamblers, on the PGSI index. It should also be noted that the non-problem and low-risk gambler groups represent only 27 of the 121 panelists.

During the card system orientation session, all panel participants, including moderate- to problem gamblers, were informed that participation in the study did *not* require them to play any more than they would outside of the study. This message was reiterated in telephone surveys as well as in mailed correspondence. Also, all participants were asked

if they were aware of the toll-free Problem Gambling Hotline, the NS Health Promotion website, the Valley District Health Authority and how to contact Gamblers Anonymous. Participants were also asked if they would like to receive any additional information, receive responsible gaming materials, or if they would like to be contacted by an appropriate individual on a confidential basis. This information was distributed as requested. All respondents were provided with gift certificates in lieu of cash incentives to minimize the risk that the funds would be used to play VLTs.

Although references to survey results are presented throughout this report by PGSI category, the reader should be cautious in drawing anything other than general, directional conclusions regarding differences across or within the categories.

CHART 1: PGSI Category



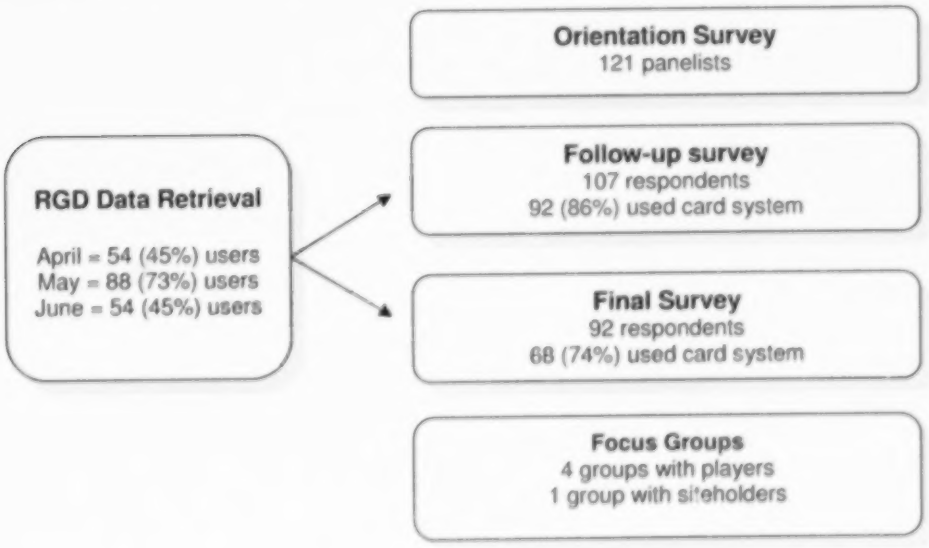
N = 121

SOURCE: Orientation Survey

As expected, a degree of attrition occurred over the test period with participants either being unavailable to complete the follow-up and/or final surveys, or participants discontinuing using their card. Interestingly, several respondents indicated on the follow-up and/or final surveys that they used the card system in a certain timeframe (i.e. the past month) but had not, in fact, actually used the device in that same timeframe according to the data collected by the Responsible Gaming Device (RGD). Possible explanations for the inconsistency between self-reported card-use and actual card-use range from attempted use but technological limitations (i.e. card didn't read), to confusing the timeframe and thinking that they had actually used the card, to respondents deliberately reporting their card-use inaccurately.

In terms of survey results, panelists were counted as qualifying to respond to questions about the functionality of the card system components if they had experience with the card system according to both their self-reported RGD usage and their actual RGD usage. Players without experience with the card system were deemed to be unable to provide an accurate and personal evaluation. The following table details the number of panelists participating in each of the listed scenarios.

CHART 2: Panelist Participation



Non-users did not generally differ from users in terms of both their demographic composition and their evaluation of the card system in general. The 19 non-users had PGSI scores above 0 with a range of low-risk gamblers to problem gamblers and a broad range of average monthly VLT spend (self reported on Orientation Survey). Their other demographic characteristics are generally consistent with the demographics of the entire panel.

Scores of panelists who did not use the card system at all, panelists who used the system in April or May only (*not* June), and panelists who used the card system in April or May *and* June were compared for the questions that were asked of all respondents, regardless of card use. These questions included support or opposition for mandatory card use,

support or opposition for limits and limit types, ensuring one card per player, providing personal information during enrollment, enrollment locations, intention to get a card, and intention to recommend and play of concern. No marked variations in responses were noted in the comparison across the aforementioned questions.

Only slight differences in scores for panelists who did not use the card system versus those who did use the system occurred. However, the 'non-user' category also only contains up to 10 records in the results (10 of the 19 non-users completed the Final Survey) versus 82 records in the 'user' category for the Final Survey. A cautious look at the data shows that more non-users tended to support providing some personal information to register for cards, and fewer non-users indicated that they plan to get a card when they are mandatory than card users.

Slight differences also occurred between respondents who used the card system in April or May only, and those who used the system in June as well as in April or May. Namely, these differences see long-term users – those who continued using the card through to June – tending to support registering for player cards at Access Nova Scotia less and supported registration at establishments that have VLTs more than participants who only used the card in April or May.

General survey results are presented later in this report.

Use of the Card System

While all participants were asked to use their card each time they played the VLTs, the card system was not mandatory for Stage I and some players openly indicated that they had not used the system.

Based solely on the RGD data set, 54 of the 121 panelists (or 45%) used the card system in April (prior to all RGDs being installed, 88 panelists (or 73%) used the card system in May and 54 (or 45%) panelists used the card system in June. The **number** of respondents who used the card system in each April, May and June are presented in Table 3 by PGSI category.

The reader is cautioned that comparisons of results within or across categories are to be viewed as directional only. NOTE THE SMALL N-VALUES IN TABLE 3.

TABLE 3:
NUMBER of Respondents Using the Card System

	Total	PGSI Category			
		Non-problem	Low-risk	Moderate-risk	Problem
Total Unweighted (N)	121	14	13	49	45
Used RGD system in April	54	7	6	22	19
Used RGD system in May	88	13	7	36	32
Used RGD system in June	54	8	5	22	19

SOURCE: RGD Data Set

Based on the initial week-4 Follow-up Survey, 92 of 107 respondents (86%) indicated that they had used the card system and had indeed actually used their card up to that point according to RGD data. As presented in Table 4, 41 of 92 participants (45%) of those who used the system reported using their card every time they played VLTs. Table 4 presents the card usage by PGSI category.

Those who didn't use their card every time they played usually cited their reasons as: forgetting to use the card, inconvenience and malfunctions of the card systems.

The reader is cautioned that comparisons of results within or across categories are to be viewed as directional only. NOTE THE SMALL N-VALUES IN TABLE 4.

TABLE 4:

Number of times card-users did NOT use card system, based on how many separate times in the previous month the user played VLTs and how many times they use the card system in the previous month
(NUMBER of Respondents)

SUBSET: Those who used the card system

	Total	PGSI Category			
		Non-problem	Low-risk	Moderate-risk	Problem
Total Unweighted (N)	92	12	8	38	34
Zero (Used card every time)	41	8	6	18	9
Once	14	2	0	5	7
Twice	10	1	0	4	5
Three or four times	10	1	1	5	3
5 or more times	17	0	1	6	10

SOURCE: Week-4 Follow-up Survey

Sixty-eight of 92 respondents (74%) to the Final Survey indicated using the card system at any point during the study period during Stage I. Of these respondents, approximately 44% used the system every time. Table 5 presents the card usage by PGSI category.

As in the Week-4 Follow-up Survey, reasons for not using the card each time the player played VLTs included: forgetting to use the card, no card system in the area they are playing, and simply not wanting to use the card.

The reader is cautioned that comparisons of results within or across categories are to be viewed as directional only. NOTE THE SMALL N-VALUES IN TABLE 5.

TABLE 5:

Number of times panelist did NOT use card system, based on how many separate times in the previous month the card-user played VLTs and how many times they use the card system in the previous month
(NUMBER of Respondents)

SUBSET: Those who used the card system

	Total	PGSI Category			
		Non-problem	Low-risk	Moderate-risk	Problem
Total Unweighted (N)	68	10	5	31	22
Zero (Used card every time)	30	4	4	16	6
Once	10	2	0	4	4
Twice	7	1	1	3	2
Three or four times	6	2	0	2	2
5 or more times	14	1	0	5	8
Don't know	1	0	0	1	0

SOURCE: Final Survey

Because of the potential for the user to remove the card and continue playing during Stage I, and for the user to play without the card at all, the data collected from the RGD does not represent the transactions of panelists in their entirety and, hence, is limited in the value it can provide for the purpose of accurately reporting actual use and does not measure effectiveness of features. Self-reported use of the card system and the features is, thus, the most accurate representation of usability and functionality.

Usability Assessment: Ratings of Card System & Features

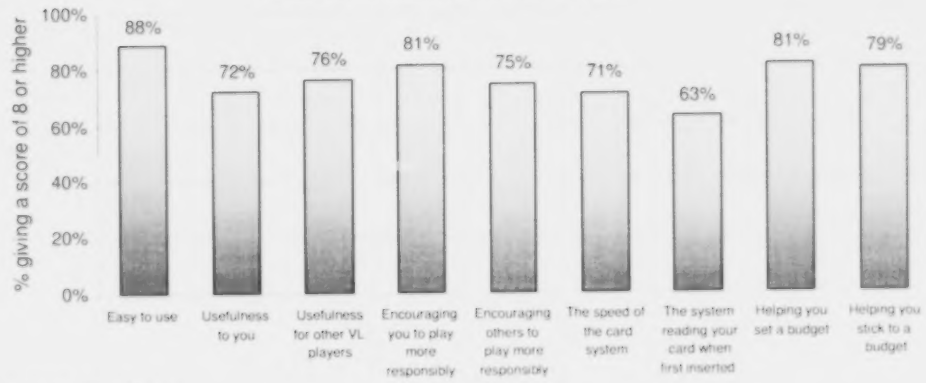
On each of the surveys, panelists were asked to evaluate the RGD using a 10-point scale where 10 is considered excellent. The elements included how useful they found the RGD for them and others as well as encouraging responsible play.

In the Orientation Survey, the ratings would have been based on perceptions of the device without the benefit of actual play. In the Final Survey, several new elements were added to this evaluation.

Chart 3 shows the ratings of 8 or higher for each element. A top-3 box score (8, 9 and 10) is being used here and is used throughout the report. Top-3 box scores are used to measure the percentage of respondents who reported a positive score and take into account several factors: 1) ratings of 7 tend to represent neutral scores; 2) ratings of 6 or less reflect displeasure or negative scores; 3) respondents who give ratings of 8, 9 or 10 represent strong positive scores, and high levels of satisfaction in this case; and 4) ratings of 8, 9 or 10 can be compared to a score of 80% or higher.

These figures are taken from the Final Survey and only include people who used the card at least once during the test period.

CHART 3: Rating the Card System



SOURCE: Final Survey

Overall ratings are consistently high with approximately 70% to 80% giving ratings of 8 or higher for each element. Table 6 presents the **number** of respondents who gave ratings of 8 or higher by PGSI category.

The reader is cautioned that comparisons of results within or across categories are to be viewed as directional only. NOTE THE SMALL N-VALUES IN TABLE 6.

TABLE 6:

Please rate the card system using a 10-point scale where 10 is excellent and 1 is very poor for each of following statements

(NUMBER of Respondents)

SUBSET: Those who used the card system at least once during the 2 month period

TOP 3 BOXES (SCORE OF 8 OUT OF 10 OR HIGHER)

	Total	PGSI Category			
		Non-problem	Low-risk	Moderate-risk	Problem
Total Unweighted (N)	68	10	5	31	22
Easy to use	60	10	5	29	16
Usefulness to you	49	6	4	23	16
Usefulness for other VL players	47	7	3	21	16
Encouraging you to play more responsibly	55	7	5	26	17
Encouraging others to play more responsibly	44	6	4	20	14
The speed of the card system	46	8	4	23	11
The system reading your card when first inserted	42	7	3	22	10
Helping you set a budget	55	8	5	25	17
Helping you stick to a budget	54	8	4	28	14

Don't know/Refusal responses have been excluded

SOURCE: Final Survey

Each of the main elements of functionality will now be examined separately:

Ease of Use and Usefulness: Over 70% gave ratings of 8 or higher for the system being useful for them and for other VL players on the Final Survey – almost 90% felt the system was easy to use.

Ratings of usefulness and easy to use were higher on the Final Survey than on the Orientation Survey. Orientation Survey ratings were based on their initial impressions following a brief orientation session. Fifty-four percent of respondents to the Orientation Survey who used their card at least once over the two month data collection period gave a rating of 8 or higher on expecting that the card system could be useful to them. Approximately 65% of the same respondents felt that the card system would be useful for others and that it would be easy to use.

Ratings obtained from the Week-4 Follow-up Survey generally fell at the half-way point

between the Orientation Survey ratings and the Final Survey ratings. The **number** of respondents who gave scores of 8 or higher for Ease of Use and Usefulness for each the Orientation Survey and Week-4 Follow-up Survey are presented in Tables 7A & B.

The reader is cautioned that comparisons of results within or across categories are to be viewed as directional only. NOTE THE SMALL N-VALUES IN TABLES 7A & B.

TABLE 7A & B:

A: Even though you have just seen the RGD device, we would like to get some initial impressions from you. Please rate the system, based on your impressions so far, using a 10-point scale where 10 is excellent and 1 is very poor
(NUMBER of Respondents)
SUBSET: Those who used the card system at least once during the 2 month period
TOP 3 BOXES (SCORE OF 8 OUT OF 10 OR HIGHER)

	Total	PGSI Category			
		Non-problem	Low-risk	Moderate-risk	Problem
Total Unweighted (N)	121	14	13	49	45
Easy to Use	77	11	12	32	22
Usefulness to you	64	8	8	23	25
Usefulness for Other VL Players	77	10	10	31	26

SOURCE: Orientation Survey

B: Please rate the card system using a 10-point scale where 10 is excellent and 1 is very poor for each of following statements
(NUMBER of Respondents)
SUBSET: Those who used the card system at least once during the 2 month period
TOP 3 BOXES (SCORE OF 8 OUT OF 10 OR HIGHER)

	Total	PGSI Category			
		Non-problem	Low-risk	Moderate-risk	Problem
Total Unweighted (N)	92	12	8	38	34
Easy to use	64	9	6	26	23
Usefulness to you	57	10	6	21	20
Usefulness for other VL players	62	9	7	24	22

SOURCE: Week-4 Follow-up Survey

Encouraging Responsible Play: According to results from the Final Survey, just over 80% of card users felt the system encouraged them to play more responsibly and three-quarters felt it encouraged responsible play in others.

As with ratings for usefulness and easy to use scores, initial impressions as collected on the Orientation Survey were somewhat lower than both Final Survey results and the

Week-4 Follow-up Survey. Approximately 75% of Orientation respondents who used the card system expected the system to encourage them to play more responsibly, and 65% anticipated that the system would encourage others to play more responsibly. Ratings were slightly higher at the Week-4 survey.

The **number** of respondents who gave scores of 8 or higher for the Responsible Play statements for each the Orientation Survey and Week-4 Follow-up Survey are presented in Tables 8A & B.

The reader is cautioned that comparisons of results within or across categories are to be viewed as directional only. NOTE THE SMALL N-VALUES IN TABLES 8A & B.

TABLE 8 A & B:

A: Even though you have just seen the RGD device, we would like to get some initial impressions from you. Please rate the system, based on your impressions so far, using a 10-point scale where 10 is excellent and 1 is very poor
(NUMBER of Respondents)

SUBSET: Those who used the card system at least once during the 2 month period
TOP 3 BOXES (SCORE OF 8 OUT OF 10 OR HIGHER)

	Total	PGSI Category			
		Non-problem	Low-risk	Moderate-risk	Problem
Total Unweighted (N)	121	14	13	49	45
Encouraging You to Play More Responsibly	89	9	8	39	33
Encouraging Others to Play More Responsibly	77	8	9	31	29

SOURCE: Orientation Survey

B: Please rate the card system using a 10-point scale where 10 is excellent and 1 is very poor for each of following statements
(NUMBER of Respondents)

SUBSET: Those who used the card system at least once during the 2 month period
TOP 3 BOXES (SCORE OF 8 OUT OF 10 OR HIGHER)

	Total	PGSI Category			
		Non-problem	Low-risk	Moderate-risk	Problem
Total Unweighted (N)	92	12	8	38	34
Encouraging you to play more responsibly	70	10	5	29	26
Encouraging others to play more responsibly	56	7	5	20	24

SOURCE: Week-4 Follow-up Survey

Setting and Sticking to Budgets: Approximately 80% gave high ratings for the RGD being helpful in setting and sticking to budgets on the Final Survey. These questions were not asked on either the Orientation or the Week-4 Follow-up Surveys.

System Evaluations: Although still reasonably high, the lowest ratings were for the system itself. The lowest ratings (63% giving 8 or higher) was for the system reading the card when first inserted, as was clearly noted from the focus groups as well, this was more of an issue for those with the higher PGSI scores (and typically the more frequent play). In this case, only 45% of those in the highest category gave a rating of 8 or more. The speed of the system was given an 8 or higher by just over 70% of the panelists.

People who rated an element 7 or lower were asked to explain their rating and there were several consistent comments made that did not specifically relate to the element being rated. There were several comments about the noises and the pop-up questions being an annoyance or attracting unwanted attention to the player that echoed comments in the focus groups. There were also comments that the system was not as useful as it might be because the player could avoid any limits by simply removing their card. Several also noted the difficulty getting the system to read their card when they first tried to use it.

There were a few comments related to the perception that the system does not help with responsible play and setting a budget because winnings are added to their budget. This confusion with what setting a spending limit actually means and does is noted throughout, and requires additional communication in the next stage. A few also commented that they felt the system reduced their chances of winning and interfered with the performance of the VLT (slower).

The focus groups mirrored these findings in a general way. The sessions each started by asking participants to record two ratings using a ten-point scale. The first rating was for how useful they felt the RGD was and the second was for how easy it was to use. These ratings should not be considered a quantitative measure – rather they should be considered as an indication of how people felt about the system. Table 9 shows the ratings for usefulness for each group. It indicates the number of people who gave a rating of 8 or higher – indicating they found the system to be useful and those who gave a rating of 7 or lower.

TABLE 9: Ratings of Usefulness

Usefulness	Group 1 PGSI scores of 0 & 1	Group 2 PGSI scores of 2 & 3	Group 3 PGSI scores of 4 - 7	Group 4 PGSI scores of 8 - 20	Site-holders Group	Total
# of respondents giving scores of 8, 9 or 10	5	2	6	3	N/A	16
# of respondents giving scores of 7 or less	4	3	1	6	N/A	14
Total	9	5	7	9	N/A	30

Source: Focus Group Results

Approximately one half of the focus group participants found the RGD system to be useful. Several commented that it was an "eye opener" and helped them realize how much money they were spending on VLTs. There were two common reasons given for lower ratings indicating the system was not useful. Several people (particularly less frequent players) felt they were already playing with a budget and they knew how much they were spending without the card. Others (particularly the more frequent players) felt it was not useful unless it was mandatory because now they could play without the card or simply take the card out when they hit limits.

The ease of use ratings were even higher than the usefulness ratings just reported. In total, 20 of the 30 panelists gave a rating of 8 or higher. In the highest PGSI group, in particular, there were serious complaints about accessing the system itself. They commented on having to insert their card multiple times before it was read to allow them to play. When asked on how many occasions they might run into these technical problems, they commented it might be as many as 8 out of 10 visits. This caused them to give up frequently and play without using the card.

The one area of great annoyance mentioned through the sessions, but particularly with the higher PGSI groups, was the pop-up responsible gaming questions. These responsible

gaming questions and answers were included in the RGD software for the test and appeared randomly during play and were accompanied by an identifying sound. The interruption was part of the annoyance, but the sound itself seemed to be as much or more the issue – aggravating both the player and those around them. Many commented that they do not even look at the question, but instead just hit yes or no to get rid of it without considering what the answer should be.

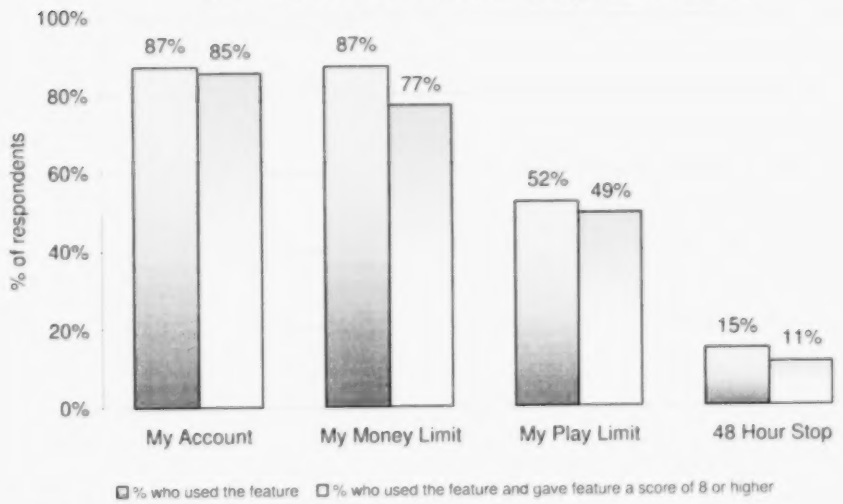
Evaluation of the Available Features

Most panelists did use the responsible gaming features when they used their player's card and it is interesting that approximately 20% of those in the higher risk PGSI categories said they used the features 10 times or more during the 9-week review.

The My Account feature (87%) and the My Money Limit (also 87%) were the two features most frequently mentioned (in terms of use) on the Final Survey. Just over half (52%) said they used the Play Limit feature and 15% also mentioned using the 48-Hour Stop button. Week-4 Follow-up Survey results were consistent with the Final Survey results with My Account (93%) being used by slightly more respondents and My Play Limit (46%) and 48-Hour Stop (11%) being used by slightly fewer respondents than in the Final Survey. The same percentage of respondents (87%) indicated using My Money Limit on the Week-4 Follow-up Survey as on the Final Survey.

Chart 4 shows the usefulness of each feature from the Final Survey. It includes only the people who gave a rating of 8 or higher and only those who actually used the feature, so it should be read "87% of the total sample who used the card system used My Account and 85% of the total gave a rating of 8 or higher."

CHART 4: Usefulness of Card-System Features



SOURCE: Final Survey

Ratings for each of the features are quite high with the lowest, the 48-Hour Stop, being considered useful by three-quarters of those who used it or 11% of the total as shown in the graph. When asked which feature was most useful, responses were split between My Account at 46% and My Money Limit at 43%.

The **number** of respondents who indicated using each of the features and the corresponding number who found the feature useful are presented in Tables 10A & B by PGSI category for the Week-4 Follow-up Survey.

The reader is cautioned that comparisons of results within or across categories are to be viewed as directional only. NOTE THE SMALL N-VALUES IN TABLES 10A & B.

TABLE 10A & B:

A: Which of the following features did you use?
(NUMBER of Respondents indicating having used the feature)
SUBSET: Those who used at least one feature offered on the system

	Total	PGSI Category			
		Non-problem	Low-risk	Moderate-risk	Problem
Total Unweighted (N)	82	11	8	33	30
My Account	76	11	6	31	28
My Money Limit	71	9	6	27	29
My Play Limit	38	2	2	13	21
48 Hour Stop	9	2	1	3	3

Don't know/Refusal responses have been excluded
SOURCE: Week-4 Follow-up Survey

B: And how useful is the feature for you personally, using a 10-point scale where 10 is excellent and 1 is poor?
(NUMBER of Respondents)
SUBSET: Those who reported using the feature
TOP 3 BOXES (SCORE OF 8 OUT OF 10 OR HIGHER)

	Total	PGSI Category			
		Non-problem	Low-risk	Moderate-risk	Problem
Total Unweighted (N)	82	11	8	33	30
My Account	68	11	6	26	25
My Money Limit	63	9	5	23	26
My Play Limit	32	2	2	10	18
48 Hour Stop	8	2	1	3	2

Don't know/Refusal responses have been excluded
SOURCE: Week-4 Follow-up Survey

Tables 11A & B present the **number** of respondents who indicated using each of the features and the corresponding number who found the feature useful by PGSI category for the Final Survey.

The reader is cautioned that comparisons of results within or across categories are to be viewed as directional only. NOTE THE SMALL N-VALUES IN TABLES 11A & B.

TABLE 11 A & B:

A: Which of the following features did you use? - SURVEY 2
(NUMBER of Respondents indicating having used the feature)
SUBSET: Those who used at least one feature offered on the system

	Total	PGSI Category			
		Non-problem	Low-risk	Moderate-risk	Problem
Total Unweighted (N)	61	8	5	27	21
My Account	53	7	4	23	19
My Money Limit	53	7	4	22	20
My Play Limit	32	4	2	14	12
48 Hour Stop	9	1	2	3	3

Don't know/Refusal responses have been excluded
SOURCE: Final Survey

B: And how useful is the feature for you personally, using a 10-point scale where 10 is excellent and 1 is poor?
(NUMBER of Respondents)
SUBSET: Those who reported using the feature
TOP 3 BOXES (SCORE OF 8 OUT OF 10 OR HIGHER)

	Total	PGSI Category			
		Non-problem	Low-risk	Moderate-risk	Problem
Total Unweighted (N)	61	8	5	27	21
My Account	52	7	4	23	18
My Money Limit	47	7	4	18	18
My Play Limit	30	4	2	12	12
48 Hour Stop	6	1	1	3	1

Don't know/Refusal responses have been excluded
SOURCE: Final Survey

The focus groups highlighted the usefulness of these same features, but added more depth of understanding as to why specific features were useful. These comments are summarized:

My Account: This feature was both the most used and generally considered the most useful. Simply knowing how much is being spent and what the player's net position is was very helpful for many of the participants.

Money Limits: Many of the participants set limits – several as they were exploring the system to see how it worked. Players really need to understand limits (usage and implications for play) before moving to the next stage, as there is still some confusion, particularly with the highest CPGI participants. One or two participants noted they have avoided cashing out when they have won because they want to keep playing. They incorrectly believe that they will lose access to their initial limit (if they have set a $20 limit and win an additional $40, they may not cash out because they feel they will not be able to put the $20 back in). Others who were concerned about not being able to play what they wanted to either set no limit at all or set a limit with some "padding" in it. Again, this suggests a need to clearly communicate how spending limits should be set and the benefits of doing so.

My Play Limit: These were not used very often, but participants still identified valid uses for the feature. They felt some people might exclude themselves from playing on their payday or on days when cheques are issued. Another example was wanting to save for something like a vacation and excluding themselves from play leading up to it. The feature was also identified as useful if someone wanted a cool-down period.

48-Hour Stop: This feature was not used at all by the panelists who participated in the focus group sessions, but there was a general feeling that it might be useful for someone needing a cooling down period to avoid chasing losses, for example.

Once the system has been accessed, the RGD and its features are generally seen as useful. That said there is still considerable concern about privacy and the ease with which someone can see the account and possibly other information by watching from behind the player.

Setting and Hitting Limits

Of those who had used the My Money Limit feature (53 people in the Final Survey), 68% said they had reached that limit at some point. Chart 5 shows what happened when they did reach their limit. *Note that multiple responses were possible in the following question and total % may exceed 100%.*

CHART 5: Result of Setting and Reaching Self-set Money Limit
N = 36

SOURCE: Final Survey

Sixty-one percent (or 22 respondents) of those who set and then hit a money limit said they stopped playing. Of this group, 6 were classified as problem gamblers, 12 as moderate-risk players, 1 as low-risk, and 3 as no-risk players. This is an interesting finding considering that players could simply remove their card and continue to play during Stage I. Forty-four percent (or 16 respondents) said they removed their card and kept playing. Those in the higher ranges of the PGSI scores were more likely to keep playing (10 of the respondents were classified as problem gamblers, 4 as moderate-risk gamblers, 1 as low-risk and 1 as a no-risk player), which will not be an option for them to do in Windsor or Mount Uniacke in the next stage of research.

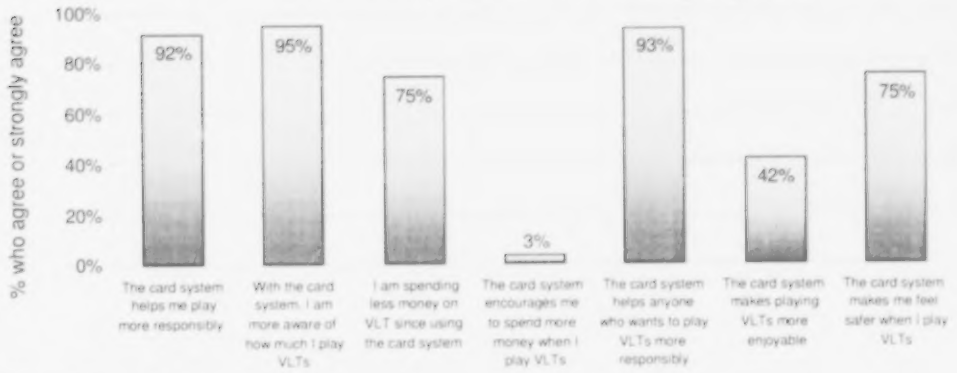
In the focus groups, admitted non-use of the card while playing was fairly common in the higher PGSI groups. In some cases, it was the annoyance of not being able to access the system and in some cases it was because people had forgotten (this was the most common reason in the lower CPGI groups). There was also some admission that limits had been hit and the player wanted to continue playing so removed the card and did so. This was only mentioned two or three times and was limited to the highest PGSI group.

In the Final Survey, those who had set a Money Limit were asked if doing so made them think differently about their play or actually play differently than they normally did. A little over half of these people (53 people had done this), 62%, agreed that it had. Most of their comments indicated that the system had helped them as they noted being able to track spending amounts, only playing up to the limit they had set, making them control what they spent, cashing out before hitting their limit and playing with smaller bets. One person said they set a higher limit than they actually wanted and three said they avoided cashing out.

Experiences with the RGD

Panelists were read a series of statements about the RGD and were asked to provide their level of agreement with each statement. Those who both used the system and agreed with each statement (agree or strongly agree) are shown in the Chart 6.

CHART 6: Experiences With the Card System


% who agree or strongly agree
100%
80%
60%
40%
20%
0%
92%
95%
75%
3%
93%
42%
75%
The card system helps me play more responsibly
With the card system, I am more aware of how much I play VLTs
I am spending less money on VLT since using the card system
The card system encourages me to spend more money when I play VLTs
The card system helps anyone who wants to play VLTs more responsibly
The card system makes playing VLTs more enjoyable
The card system makes me feel safer when I play VLTs

SOURCE: Final Survey

Agreement levels were very similar following the first survey, but since additional attributes were included in the Final Survey, only those responses are included.

Again, responses are quite positive. Over 90% agreed the system helps them play more responsibly, that they are more aware of how much they play, and that the system would help anyone who wants to play more responsibly. Three quarters (75%) agreed they are both spending less money and feeling safer when they play VLTs. Only 3% (one person with a PGSI of 0 or 1 and one person in the 8 or higher category) says the RGD encourages them to spend more money. When asked along-side the statements outlined in Chart 6, 42% agree the card system makes playing VLTs more enjoyable.

Table 12 presents the **number** of respondents who gave a score of 8 or higher for each of the statements regarding their experiences with the card system by PGSI category for the Final Survey.

The reader is cautioned that comparisons of results within or across categories are to be viewed as directional only. NOTE THE SMALL N-VALUES IN TABLE 12.

TABLE 12:

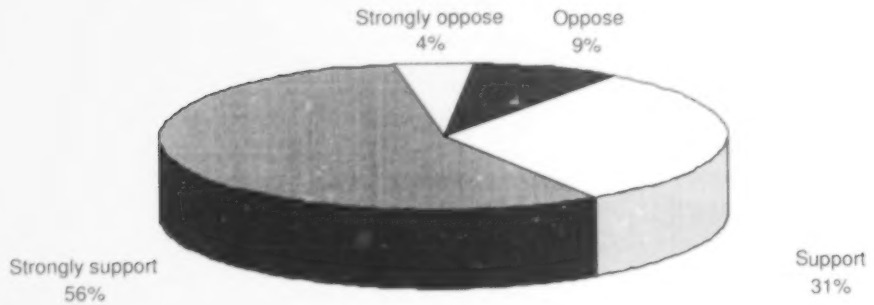
Please indicate whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with each of the following statements
(NUMBER of Respondents who Agree or Strongly Agree with the statement)
SUBSET: Those who used the card system

		PGSI Category			
		Non-problem	Low-risk	Moderate-risk	Problem
Total Unweighted (N)	61	8	5	27	21
The card system helps me play more responsibly	56	7	5	26	18
With the card system, I am more aware of how much I play VLTs	58	8	5	26	19
I am spending less money on VLT since using the card system	44	4	2	23	15
The card system encourages me to spend more money when I play VLTs	2	1	0	0	1
The card system helps anyone who wants to play VLTs more responsibly	57	7	5	26	19
The card system makes playing VLTs more enjoyable	25	4	3	10	8
The card system makes me feel safer when I play VLTs	45	6	5	19	15

Don't know/Refusal responses have been excluded
SOURCE: Final Survey

As Chart 7 depicts, there is strong support (56% strongly and 31% support) for having player cards mandatory for anyone wanting to play VLTs in Nova Scotia and this support was generally consistent across all PGSI categories. This provides solid support for the next planned research stage in Windsor and Mount Uniacke, whereby player cards will be mandatory.

CHART 7: Support of Mandatory Usage



N = 91

SOURCE: Final Survey

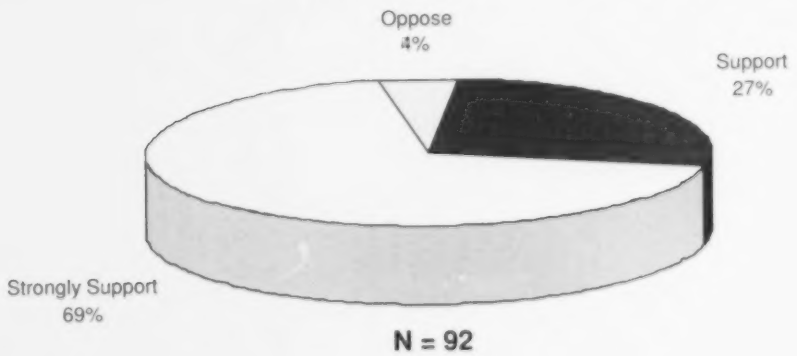
Registration for Stage III

In addition to usability and functionality objectives for Stage I, efforts were focused on assessing potential registration systems and processes which will be needed during Stage III.

In the focus groups with panelists, there was general recognition that there should be only one card per player and that it should not be too easy to have more than one card. Participants recognized that it would be difficult to guarantee that there was only one card to each person, but felt reasonable efforts needed to be made to do this. A balance does need to be struck here – if enrollment is made too difficult the lighter and or occasional players will not bother and, therefore, will not benefit from the features. Conversely, if it is too easy to get another or a second card, there is no point in having cards at all.

The Final Survey strongly supported this finding in that 69% strongly support and an additional 27% support ensuring that each player only be allowed to have one card at a time. This finding provides indirect support for the need to implement some form of registration or enrollment process to limit the number of cards per person.

CHART 8: Support for One Card Per Player



N = 92

SOURCE: Final Survey

In the focus groups, neither the siteholders nor the panelists believe that bar staff will be able to handle the rush of "applicants" when the system is first made mandatory. There is an expectation that the process of getting a card will be fast – taking approximately 5 minutes with the card being available and activated at the end.

The focus groups also highlighted the great concerns about privacy of information and being able to trace play levels to individuals. This relates to three sentiments – my winnings might be taxed at some point in the future; it is nobody's business but my own; and I might have a source of income that can be traced to me through the system (e.g. Bob is spending more money than he has earned according to his tax records).

There is great skepticism about information that is said to be deleted. All participants are familiar with deleting items from computers and being able to retrieve this information later.

Two options were presented and discussed in each session with both options using a mathematical algorithm to develop a unique number that would be re-created if the player lost their card or tried to get more than one card. Option A used some personal information, that would be verified by the attendant using a photo I.D. (e.g., the person's driver's license), to create the account number. Option B used what's known as biometrics, essentially the person's thumb or palm print to create a sequence of numbers to create the account

Participants were told that under either option, the driver's licence information or biometric print would be deleted once the account number was created. Participants were asked to rate each option and the number of those giving a rating of 8 or higher and 7 or lower are shown in the Tables 13 A & B, respectively.

TABLE 13A: Ratings of Registration Options – Driver's Licence

Personal Information	Group 1 PGSI scores of 0 & 1	Group 2 PGSI scores of 2 & 3	Group 3 PGSI scores of 4 - 7	Group 4 PGSI scores of 8 – 20	Site-holders Group	Total
# of respondents giving scores of 8, 9 or 10	0	0	1	4	0	5
# of respondents giving scores of 7 or less	9	4	6	5	0	24
Total	9	4	7	9	0	29

Source: Focus Group Results

TABLE 13B: Ratings of Registration Options - Biometrics

Biometrics	Group 1 PGSI scores of 0 & 1	Group 2 PGSI scores of 2 & 3	Group 3 PGSI scores of 4 - 7	Group 4 PGSI scores of 8 – 20	Site-holders Group	Total
# of respondents giving scores of 8, 9 or 10	4	2	1	8	0	15
# of respondents giving scores of 7 or less	5	2	6	1	0	14
Total	9	4	7	9	0	29

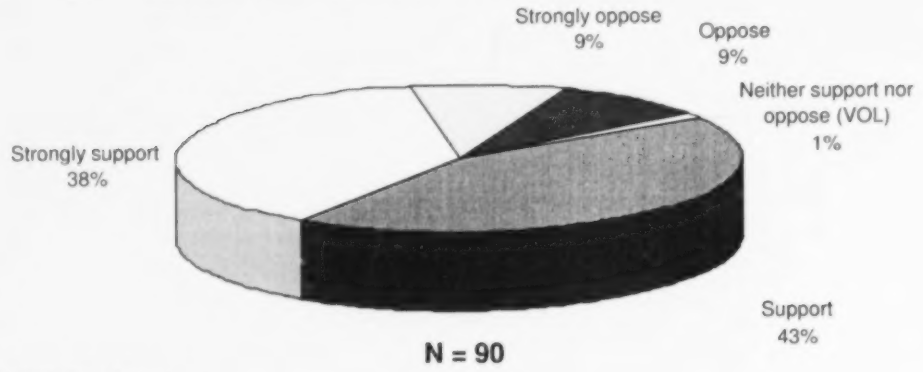
Source: Focus Group Results

The results of the ratings are interesting in that the biometrics option was the preferred of the two, but there were certainly concerns expressed by several that a thumb print was simply too personal. Several people did not like either option and the siteholders were generally opposed to either. Those who preferred the biometrics option noted that while it might be personal, there was not any personal information attached to it for most people. Acceptance of the biometrics appeared to be related to age in that younger people were more accepting of it.

The concern with providing personal information that would be verified by a driver's license mostly related to being able to take other personal information from it and the disbelief that this information would be deleted once used. The other concern with a driver's license is that not everyone has one. Other options such as social insurance numbers, credit cards or health cards were even more negatively perceived. The only option that was generally acceptable to those who did not want to use their license was a birth certificate, but they also noted that most people do not carry these with them.

This issue was explored further in the Final Survey, but only the personal information option (validated by driver's license) was presented as the biometrics option is not technically feasible for Stage III of this project which is scheduled to begin in October, 2005. Reaction from the Final Survey suggested that there is much less resistance to providing personal information than seemed to be the case in the focus groups. Clearly, much communications work needs to be done to convince players that their personal information is safe and that it will, in fact, be deleted once the account is created.

CHART 9: Willingness to Reveal Personal Information



N = 90

SOURCE: Final Survey

Over 80% of the panelists support providing such information and 18% oppose it. When looking at this result, based on PGSI classifications, it appears that there is slightly less opposition from respondents in the problem and moderate-risk groups. The **number** of respondents who strongly oppose, oppose, support, strongly support or neither support nor oppose providing personal information is presented in Table 14 by PGSI category.

The reader is cautioned that comparisons of results within or across categories are to be viewed as directional only. NOTE THE SMALL N-VALUES IN TABLE 14.

TABLE 14:

How strongly do you support/oppose the idea of people providing some personal info from their Drivers License as a part of the registration process, understanding that the information will be deleted as their card is issued?
(NUMBER of Respondents)

		PGSI Category			
		Non-problem	Low-risk	Moderate-risk	Problem
Total Unweighted (N)	90	14	8	37	31
Strongly oppose	8	2	1	4	1
Oppose	8	3	1	2	2
Neither support nor oppose (VOL)	1	0	0	1	0
Support	39	3	2	20	14
Strongly support	34	6	4	10	14

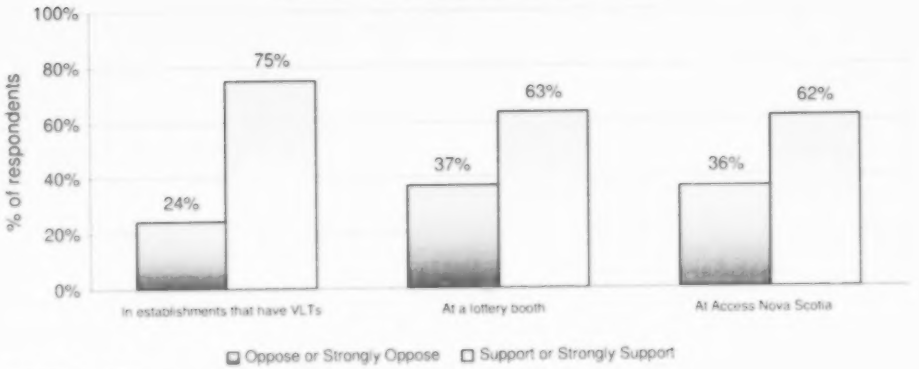
Don't know/Refusal responses have been excluded

SOURCE: Final Survey

However, we should not underestimate opposition to providing personal information and at the very least, an explanation as to why the information is needed should be provided and assurance that it will be deleted. In the focus groups, there was more opportunity to discuss the options and for comments from one to influence the perceptions of another. The focus group setting is more like the setting where the cards will be issued and, therefore, more opposition should be expected.

Several options were given in the Final Survey of places where a player might register for their card. Chart 10 shows both support for and opposition to each of the options given. (Note: those who neither supported nor opposed the option have not been included in the chart)

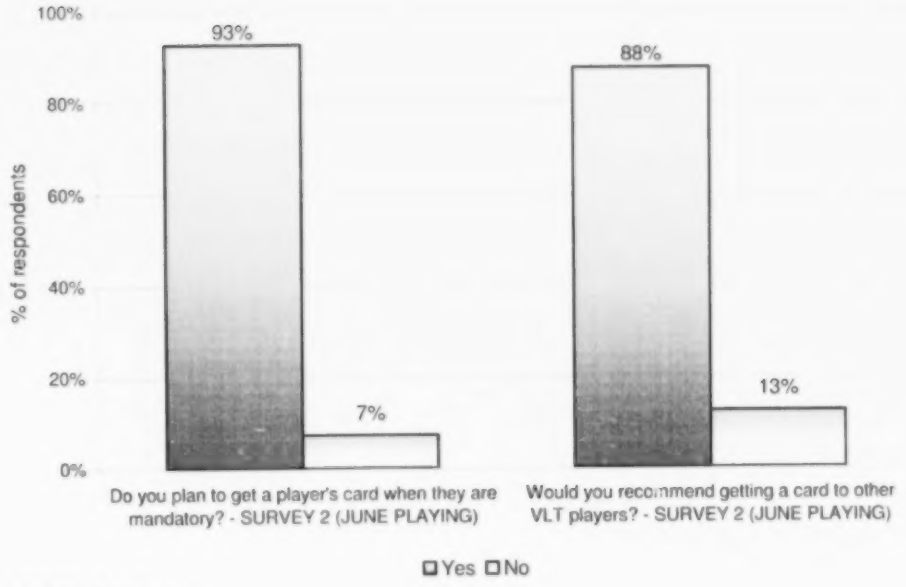
CHART 10: Registration Locations



SOURCE: Final Survey

The majority supported each of the locations, but 24% oppose having registration where there are VLTs, 37% oppose it at lottery booths and 36% oppose it at Access Nova Scotia. Over 90% of the panelists suggest they will get a card when it is mandatory for play and a similar number said they would recommend a card to other VLT players.

CHART 11: Intent to Use & Recommend to Others



SOURCE: Final Survey

Participants in the siteholder focus group did not indicate that they were particularly willing to assist with any registration or monitoring operations as they felt they were both too busy and would be assisting with an activity that would interfere with their main business and revenue earning (i.e. food and beverage sales). They were more willing to be cooperative if they were compensated, particularly during the test when they felt they were being penalized and others were not (if the test is not province-wide). Their suggestion was to increase the siteholder commission paid during that time. Compensation was for being a "test-site", as they still felt very strongly that they should not have to administer enrollment.

VLT Play of Concern

Towards the end of each survey, panelists were asked if the card system had made them realize anything about their VLT play that was bothering them. In the Final Survey, 30% of the 86 respondents who responded to the question said there was. Their concern was that it was easy to loose track of their spending without their card, and that they were spending too much.

Anyone who indicated they were concerned about their play was offered several options – materials, problem gambling help lines as well as the name, number and office hours of a local counselor. Numbers for counseling, office hours, and help lines were provided while the respondent was on the phone. In the case of the counselor, contact was made first so that the counselor was expecting calls and knew the context of the calls. In the case of materials, a package of materials was sent to each person requesting it. This included Play by Play brochures and other problem gambling materials and resources.

Appendix A: Orientation Survey

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Thanks for agreeing to be part of this player panel. Hopefully you will find the process interesting. You were all recruited at random and we were looking for people who play VLTs at different levels – some infrequently and some more regularly. What we are trying to do, with your help is evaluate a card system for VLT players. Please be assured that your individual responses and your VLT playing habits will be treated absolutely confidentially.

In the next week or so you will start to see a new unit next to each VLT machine in the Windsor/Mount Uniacke area. The unit is known as a Responsible Gaming Device or RGD for short. You will each be given a card and we will show you how to use the RGD and the features on it before you leave today.

We ask that you use the player card provided each time you play VLTs. In fact, it is absolutely critical you do, as it is the only way we can get reliable research data and that is our goal.

The player card will allow you to keep track of your spending while playing VLTs and it also has features to allow you to set spending limits or limit yourself from playing. Whether you use the features or not is up to you, but we would still like you to use the card whenever you play. That said, we would like you to at least review and possibly try some of the available options so you can comment on them. This is another valuable part of this research.

This initial research stage will go on for 12 weeks and we will contact you three times through that time and possibly a fourth as we want to invite some of you to a final focus group. We will contact you to tell you when the devices are installed and then again to do a short survey with you in about four weeks. We will do a second survey in 12 weeks and also contact some of you in 12 weeks for a focus group. We have a $50 certificate from Superstore today once you finish the survey and then we will send you your choice of a $50 certificate from Superstore, Sobeys, NS Power or Aliant (please check your preference) when we complete the next survey and the final one. We will also have a certificate for those who participate in the focus group.

We will need your name, address and phone number for the survey and to send the certificates and your preferred certificate.

Full Name: _____

Full Mailing Address: _____

_____

_____

Phone: _____

Preferred Certificate: Superstore [ ] Sobeys [ ]

Card # _____

1. How often do you usually play VLTs? **PLEASE CIRCLE THE BEST ANSWER**

Every day 1
A few times a week 2
Once a week 3
A few times a month 4
Once a month 5
Less than once a month 6
A few times a year 7
Don't Know 9

2. How much would you spend playing VLTs in a typical month?

$_____

3. The next nine questions deal with gambling and gaming. Please answer each of the nine questions as honestly as you can. Your answers will be treated confidentially and will be used to help us classify the other information you have provided. **THE CHOICES ARE: ALMOST ALWAYS, MOST OF THE TIME, SOMETIMES AND NEVER AND YOU SHOULD ANSWER EACH QUESTION.**

In the past 12 months have you...

	Never	Sometimes	Most of the Time	Almost Always
a. Bet more than you could afford to lose	0	1	2	3
b. Needed to gamble with larger amounts of money to get the same feeling of excitement	0	1	2	3
c. Gone back another day to try to win back the money you bet?	0	1	2	3
d. Borrowed money or sold anything to get money to gamble	0	1	2	3
e. Felt you might have a problem with gambling?	0	1	2	3
f. Have people criticized your betting or told you that you had a gambling problem, regardless of whether or not you thought it was true?	0	1	2	3
g. Felt guilty about the way you gamble or what happens when you gamble?	0	1	2	3
h. Has gambling caused you any health problems, including stress or anxiety	0	1	2	3
i. Has your gambling caused any financial problems for you or your household	0	1	2	3

4. Even though you have just seen the RGD device, we would like to get some initial impressions from you. Please rate the system, based on your impressions so far, using a 10-point scale where 10 is excellent and 1 is very poor. **PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER FOR EACH**:

a. easy to use	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
b. usefulness for you	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
c. usefulness for other VL players	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
d. encouraging you to play responsibly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
e. encouraging others to play more responsibly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

5. Demographics

There are just a few more questions about you and your household that will help us analyze the survey results. As with all the answers you have provided, your responses will be kept strictly confidential. **PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER FOR EACH.**

D1. Which of the following best describes your current employment status? Are you...

Employed by company/ organization.....1
Self employed 2
Not employed outside the house & looking for work.....3
Not employed outside the house & not looking for work.....4
Retired.....5
A student 6

D2. Which of the following best describes the highest level of education you have had an opportunity to complete?

Less than high school.....1
High school graduate.....2
Some trade/technical college.....3
Graduated trade/technical college 4
Some university.....5
Graduated university 6

D3. Which of the following categories best represents your total household income?

$25,000 or less 1
$25,001 to $50,000.....2
$50,001 to $75,000.....3
$75,001 to $100,000.....4
More than $100,000 5

D4. Are you

Male..... 1
Female 2

Thank you very much for your time. You have been very helpful and all your answers will be kept strictly confidential. Please remember to use your card everytime you play and we will be back in touch with you in 4 weeks.

Appendix B: Follow-up Survey

Good evening, it is _____ from Omnifacts Bristol Research and I am calling for ____. We are doing one of our Follow-up Surveys for the VLT card system and we wanted to ask you several questions.

Before I get into the questions, I just wanted to review a couple of points about the study. First, you are involved with this research to help us evaluate the card-based responsible gaming device. All of the information you provide, including your playing patterns, will be treated confidentially and used to evaluate the device.

Also, it is important to reiterate what was mentioned at the first orientation session. We do not want you to play VLTs any more than you normally would. Our intention is to simply gather your opinions and feedback on the card-system and features during the times when you decide to play. If you change your mind at any point and don't want to be part of the study any more, please let us know.

Let me start with some general questions about the card-based system and how often you have used the system over the past few weeks.

B1a. During the past month, how many separate times have you played Video Lottery Terminals or VLTs?

_____ times.

B1b. During the past month, how many times did you use the card system?
_____ times

If 0 to both – ask B1c

B1c. When you joined the study approximately one month ago, how many times in a typical month would you have played VLTs?

_____ times

IF 0 WHEN THEY JOINED THE STUDY – This study is designed for people who were playing VLTs at least once a month when they began the study. In order to get valid research results, we need to test this technology with the help of players who use the machines. Since this play level does not apply to you, we will excuse you from further research at this time. Thank you for your participation up to now, but the study needs to involve VLT players in order to assess whether this tool would be helpful to them.

B1d. **If B1a is 0, B1b is 0 and B1c is greater than 0, read:**
We certainly do not want to encourage you to play any more than you wish. However, we should ask if you want to continue with this study. **(If a player has just forgot to use the card, lost it, etc., but is a regular player, he/she is to remain in the study and encouraged to use the card when playing).**

B1e. **If yes to B1d:** Again, we don't want you to play more than you wish, we just ask when you do play that you use your card – **Go to Q12.**
If no to B1d: – thank you for your help so far and we will remove your data from the study.

If B1a is 0 and B1b is greater than 0, go to B5.

If B1a is greater than B1b, ask B4a.
As long as B1a is greater than 0 ask:

B2. Approximately how much money have you spent on VLT play during the past month?

$_____

B4a. Why didn't you use the card system each time you played?

B4b. **If player simply does not want to use the card**: We certainly do not want to encourage you to play any more than you wish. However, we do require that as part of the study for participants to use the card while playing VLTs so that we can evaluate the card based system. Do you still wish to continue as part of this study?

B5. I would like you to rate the card system using a 10-point scale where 10 is excellent and 1 is very poor for each of the following: Please remember, we want to rate the card system and not the VLT itself.

a. easy to use
b. Usefulness for you
c. Usefulness for other VL players who want to control their play
d. Encouraging you to play responsibly
e. Encouraging others to play more responsibly
f. The speed of the card system

B6. **For any response that is under 8, ask,** Is there any particular reason for your rating?

B7. When you used the card system, how many times would you have used the features offered on the system? _____ times **IF 0, GO TO B11**

B8. I am going to read a list of features available on the card system. First I would like you to tell me if you used the feature?

a. My Account (tracks wins, losses and money spent) Used yes/no
b. My Money Limit (player sets money limits) Used Yes/No
c. My play Limit (player sets non-play days) Used Yes/No
d. 48 hour stop (player excludes themselves for 48 hours) Used/Yes/No

B9. Next I am going to read the same list and I would like you to rate the feature using a 10-point scale where 10 is excellent 1 is poor. As you are rating the feature, please think of how useful it is for you personally.

a. My Account (tracks wins, losses and money spent) _____
b. My Money Limit (player sets money limits) _____
c. My play Limit (player sets non-play days) _____
d. 48 hour stop (player excludes themselves for 48 hours) _____

B10.Which feature did you find most useful?

a. My Account (tracks wins, losses and money spent) _____
b. My Money Limit (player sets money limits) _____
c. My play Limit (player sets non-play days) _____
d. 48 hour stop (player excludes themselves for 48 hours) _____

B11. I am going to read several statements and would like you to tell me if you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with each.

a. The card system helps me play more responsibly (e.g., stick to a budget, reduce play time).
b. With the card system, I am more aware of how much I play VLTs
c. I am spending less money on VLT since using the card system.
d. The card system encourages me to spend more money when I play VLTs.
e. The card system helps anyone who wants to play VLTs more responsibly

B12. You are using the card system as part of a test. How strongly do you support or oppose the idea of making it mandatory for everyone who wants to play VLTs in Nova Scotia to use a card such as this? Do you

Strongly support 1
Support 2
Neither support nor oppose 3
Oppose 4
Strongly oppose 5

B13. Why do you feel that way?

B14. How strongly do you support or oppose the idea of the card having preset spending limits rather than limits chosen by the player? Do you

Strongly support 1
Support 2
Neither support nor oppose 3
Oppose 4
Strongly oppose 5

B15. Why do you feel that way?

B16. Do you believe other players that are not part of this research would be interested in using a card if available?

Yes 1
No 2
Not sure 9

B17. Do you have any suggestions at this point that might make the system more effective?

B18a. Has using the card system made you realize anything about your VLT playing that is bothering you?

Yes ..... 1 **ASK 18b**
No 2

18b. Would you briefly describe what it is that is bothering you or that you have an issue with? **RECORD ANSWER VERBATIM**

18c. Whether you have any concerns about your VLT playing or not, I would like to ask you if you are aware of the following local resources for people who are experiencing problems with their gambling and want some help. Which of the following are you aware of: **READ LIST AND ROTATE ORDER**

a. The 1-888-347-8888 problem gambling hotline
b. The NS Government website (www.gov.ns.ca/ohp)
c. The Valley District Health Authority 679-2392
d. Gamblers Anonymous (which can be accessed through the 1-888 number)

18d. Would you like additional information to be sent to you on any of these services, responsible gaming materials or would you like to be contacted by an appropriate representative on a confidential basis?

If yes: probe for the services they would like/provide phone numbers/contact information:

e. The 1-888-347-888 problem gambling hotline
f. The NS Government website (www.gov.ns.ca/ohp)
g. The Valley District Health Authority 679-2392
h. Gamblers Anonymous (which can be accessed through the 1-888 number)
i. Responsible gaming materials
j. Contact from an appropriate representative on a confidential basis.

That's all the questions I have now and as a token of our appreciation for your time on this project, we would like to send you a $50 gift certificate from either Sobeys or Superstore. Which of the two would you prefer? Thanks again – remember to use your card when you play VLT and we will be back in touch with you in 7-8 weeks.

Phone number:_____

Player Card # _____

Appendix C: Final Survey

Good evening, it is _____ from Omnifacts Bristol Research and I am calling for _____. We are doing the final Follow-up Survey for the VLT card system and we wanted to ask you several questions.

Before I get into the questions, I wanted to thank you for your help through the study. This stage of the research ended on June 30th and we will not be collecting any data off the system after that. However, the system itself will be left on for some time for those who want to continue to use it. We will be involved in the next stage of testing scheduled for the Fall, but if you have any questions or concerns in the meantime, please feel free to contact us or one of the contacts we will give you at the end of the survey. As usual, all of the information you provide, including your playing patterns, will be treated confidentially and used to evaluate the device.

Let me start with some general questions about the card-based system and how often you have used the system over the past few weeks.

C1a. During the past month, how many separate times have you played Video Lottery Terminals or VLTs?
_ _____ times.

C1b. During the past month, how many times did you use the card system?
_____ times

If 1a is 0 and 1b is greater than 0, go to C5.
If 1a is greater than 1b, ask C4a.
As long as 1a is greater than 0 ask:

C2. Approximately how much money have you spent on VLT play during the past month?
$_____

C4a. Why didn't you use the card system each time you played?

C5. I would like you to rate the card system using a 10-point scale where 10 is excellent and 1 is very poor for each of the following: Please remember, we want to rate the card system and not the VLT itself. ROTATE ORDER

a. Easy to use
b. Usefulness for you
c. Usefulness for other VL players who want to control their play
d. Encouraging you to play responsibly
e. Encouraging others to play more responsibly
f. The speed of the card system
g. The system reading your card when first inserted
h. Helping you set a budget
i. Helping you stick to a budget

C6. **For any response that is under 8, ask:** Is there any particular reason for your rating?

C7. When you used the card system, how many times would you have used the features offered on the system?
_____ times **IF 0, GO TO CQ11**

C8. I am going to read a list of features available on the card system. First I would like you to tell me if you used the feature?

a. My Account (tracks wins, losses and money spent) Used yes/no
b. My Money Limit (player sets money limits) Used Yes/No
c. My play Limit (player sets non-play days) Used Yes/No
d. 8 hour stop (player excludes themselves for 48 hours) Used/Yes/No

C9. Next I am going to read the same list and I would like you to rate the feature using a 10-point scale where 10 is excellent 1 is poor. As you are rating the feature, please think of how useful it is for you personally.

a. My Account (tracks wins, losses and money spent) _____
b. My Money Limit (player sets money limits) _____
c. My play Limit (player sets non-play days) _____
d. 48 hour stop (player excludes themselves for 48 hours) _____

C10. Which feature did you find most useful?

a. My Account (tracks wins, losses and money spent) _____
b. My Money Limit (player sets money limits) _____
c. My play Limit (player sets non-play days) _____
d. 48 hour stop (player excludes themselves for 48 hours) _____

C10b. **If player has set a money limit in Q8, ask:** When you set your money limits, did you ever reach that limit?

Yes	1	**GO TO C10C**
No	2	**GO TO C10D**
Don't Know/Not Sure	9	

C10c. What happened when you reached that limit? **DO NOT READ, RECORD AS MANY AS MENTIONED**

Stopped playing 1
Removed card and kept playing 2
Got angry/annoyed 3
Other specify_____

C10d. Did setting a dollar limit cause you to think about your play or actually play any differently than you normally do?

Yes	1	**GO TO C10E**
No	2	**GO TO C11**
Don't Know/Not Sure	9	

C10e. How was your play different from what you normally do? **DO NOT READ, RECORD AS MANY AS MENTIONED**

Set a higher limit than actually wanted 1
Avoided cashing out 2
Other specify _____

C11. I am going to read several statements and would like you to tell me if you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with each. **ROTATE ORDER**

a. The card system helps me play more responsibly (e.g., stick to a budget, reduce play time).
b. With the card system, I am more aware of how much I play VLTs
c. I am spending less money on VLT since using the card system.
d. The card system encourages me to spend more money when I play VLTs.
e. The card system helps anyone who wants to play VLTs more responsibly
f. The card system makes playing VLTs more enjoyable
g. The card system makes me feel safer when I play VLTs

C12. You are using the card system as part of a test. How strongly do you support or oppose the idea of making it mandatory for everyone who wants to play VLTs in Nova Scotia to use a card such as this? Do you…

Strongly support 1
Support 2
Neither support nor oppose 3
Oppose 4
Strongly oppose 5

C13. Why do you feel that way?

NOTE: Questions C14 through C16 (relating to limit) asked respondents to evaluate the card system on a topic that was outside the research objectives for Stage I and, thus, are not included in the Stage I report. Results from questions C14 through C16 will be analyzed in conjunction with Stage III questions on the same topic.

C14. I am going to read three options to you and I would like you to tell me how strongly you support or oppose each? Do you…

a. Allowing the player to decide if there should be any spending limits set?
   Strongly support 1
   Support 2
   Neither support nor oppose 3
   Oppose 4
   Strongly oppose 5

b. Making it mandatory that a SPENDING limit be set, but allowing the player to decide what that limit is?
   Strongly support 1
   Support 2
   Neither support nor oppose 3
   Oppose 4
   Strongly oppose 5

c. Having a preset maximum spending limit that would apply to all players?
   Strongly support 1
   Support 2
   Neither support nor oppose 3
   Oppose 4
   Strongly oppose 5

C15. Of the three, having the player decide if there should be a limit, insisting that a limit be set, but allowing the player to decide what it is or having a preset maximum limit, which do you think is the best option?

Allowing the player to decide if there should be any spending limits set? 1
Making it mandatory that a playing limit be set, but allowing the player to decide what that limit is? 2
Having a preset maximum spending limit that would apply to all players? 3

C16. **If (3) is chosen in B15:** What do you think the daily maximum limit should be?

C17. Do you have any suggestions at this point that might make the system more effective?

The next stage of this research is scheduled for October and at that point, everybody who wants to play VLTs in the Windsor area will need to have a card.

C17a: How strongly do you support or oppose ensuring that each player only be allowed to have one card at a time. (for example replacement cards are permitted, but not two cards at once.

Strongly support 1
Support 2
Neither support nor oppose 3
Oppose 4
Strongly oppose 5

C17b. Whether you feel it is important to have only one card per person or not, in order to have only one card available to each player and to ensure that everybody is 19 years of age or older, there will be a registration process. How strongly do you support or oppose the idea of people who want a player's card providing some personal information such as their name, age and postal code from their driver's license as part of the registration process with the understanding that information they provide would be deleted as their card is issued?

Strongly support 1
Support 2
Neither support nor oppose 3
Oppose 4
Strongly oppose 5

C17c. **If oppose:** Why do you feel that way? **DO NOT READ, CODE AS MANY AS MENTIONED**

Everybody doesn't have a license 1
Personal information on license 2
Match person to playing data/other information 3
Other specify _____

C17d: **If oppose:** How strong a deterrent is having to provide information from your drivers license to your getting a players card? **READ CHOICES**

Very strong deterrent 5
Strong deterrent 4
Not a strong deterrent 2
A very strong deterrent 1

C17e. **If opposed to driver's license:** Do you have another suggestion other than a person's drivers license that would be more acceptable to you TO ENSURE ONLY ONE CARD IS ISSUED TO EACH PERSON? **Record suggestion below:**

C17F. I am going to read a list of places where a person could register for a player's card. How strongly do you support or oppose being able to register in each of the following:

In establishments that have VLTs
Very strong deterrent 5
Strong deterrent 4
Not a strong deterrent 2
A very strong deterrent 1

At a lottery booth

Very strong deterrent.....5
Strong deterrent.....4
Not a strong deterrent.....2
A very strong deterrent.....1

Access Nova Scotia

Very strong deterrent.....5
Strong deterrent.....4
Not a strong deterrent.....2
A very strong deterrent.....1

C17g. Ask All: Do you plan to get a player's card when they are mandatory?

Yes.....1
No.....2

C17h. Would you recommend getting a card to other VLT players?

C18a. Has using the card system made you realize anything about your VLT playing that is bothering you?

Yes..... 1 **ASK C18b**
No..... 2

C18b. Would you briefly describe what it is that is bothering you or that you have an issue with? RECORD ANSWER VERBATIM.

C18c. Whether you have any concerns about your VLT playing or not, I would like to ask you if you are aware of the following local resources for people who are experiencing problems with their gambling and want some help. Which of the following are you aware of: **READ LIST AND ROTATE ORDER**

a. The 1-888-347-8888 problem gambling hotline
b. The NS Government website (www.gov.ns.ca/ohp)
c. The Valley District Health Authority 679-2392
d. Gamblers Anonymous (which can be accessed through the 1-888 number)

C18d. Would you like additional information to be sent to you on any of these services, responsible gaming materials or would you like to be contacted by an appropriate representative on a confidential basis?

If yes: probe for the services they would like/provide phone numbers/contact information:

The 1-888-347-888 problem gambling hotline (provide right away)
The NS Government website (www.gov.ns.ca/ohp) (provide right away)
The Valley District Health Authority 679-2392 (provide right away)
Gamblers Anonymous (which can be accessed through the 1-888 number)
Responsible gaming materials (we can mail these to you)

Contact from an appropriate representative on a confidential basis. (the counselor in Windsor is Darlene Miller Thompson and her number is 792-2021. She works part time so it is important to provide her hours as well:

Monday from 11 – 2:30
Tuesday and Wednesday from 11:00 to 7:00
Friday from 11 – 7:00

Thanks for your help. Again, we will send a gift certificate as a token of appreciation for your time on this project. Which type of certificate would you like? Thanks again – remember we are not collecting any data from the system, but it is still available for you to use if you wish. Finally, even though this part of the study is over, would we be able to contact you again in the future for possible other research projects?

Yes
No

Phone number:_____
Player Card # _____

Appendix D: Focus Group Discussion Guides

Draft Discussion Guide
Windsor Siteholders

1. Introduction

Thank participants for coming – ensure them all their individual comments will be treated confidentially.
Ask for their first name and a quick introduction about which bar they are representing and what they do there.

2. Experiences with Card and System

Is anyone in the room also a card-user on our panel? If there is, maybe I could get you to hold back on your own experiences with the card.
You have probably all seen these cards and devices over the past few months and I want to start by getting your impressions of them. I would like to get your initial impressions of the card and device, what does it mean to the people who are using them? What is the first word that comes to mind – quickly review words.
The people who are using the cards, do you think they are finding it helpful? Do they appear uncomfortable in any way? Is this a positive thing or negative for them?
How much interaction have you and your staff had with these people? Does it seem to have been a smooth process? Are you aware of any problems that might have been caused either for you or for the players?

3. Next Stage

I am not sure how much you know about the next stage of this testing, but in the fall, the plan is to move to a mandatory system in this area. The objective is still to learn whether these devices are helpful or not and to see how they might be improved.
If the system were a mandatory system, in other words, everyone who wanted to play VLTs would have to have a card, what do you think would happen? Would people take cards or would they try to work around them? Why do you think the system might be made mandatory?
Are there any immediate concerns that come to mind for you? What questions would you like addressed?

4. Registration Process

The question is how to make cards available to people who want them and I have two options to review with you. Before I do that, I want to first address one area that will likely be of concern to you- that is privacy concerns. With both of the options I will present, I want to make it clear that your personal information will be protected by all laws and there will not be any way to trace the information back to you as a person, unless proper consent is given.

OPTION ONE:

I'll describe the first option as I understand it, a registration style enrollment. In this option, I would approach the agent and request a player card. I would then insert the card into the RGD and the system would walk me through the short enrollment process. I would be asked to type in my first and last name, birthdate, postal code, and gender. The system would then prompt me to have this information confirmed by the agent as being correct- so I would simply show my ID to the agent and he/she would confirm it.

Either way, I would then press enroll, and the system would create a unique account number based on the information entered. Once this account number is created, all of my personal information is deleted, and there is NO WAY to trace it back to me personally- all that's left is a number. A card is then activated, and linked to a personal account number (not a person).

ask people to record a rating of it from their own perspective? Discuss Ratings. Would it improve or hurt this option if you could simply swipe your drivers license or access Nova Scotia ID, and this information would be automatically be added, thus speeding up the process. What do they think about the swiping of a license instead of inputting?

Ask what they think would happen if a player lost their card, what would they do? What would happen when they re-enrolled (answer, system would recognize that the account was already created, as variables inputted will always generate the same number, and generate a new card with all the same limits and history).

Collect ratings and discuss reasons for the high and low ratings. If there were consistent negatives, what would they suggest to address these? Are there any concerns about the information requested? How easy or difficult should it be to get another card? Where should I be able to get a card from and who would I see to get it – should they be in all bars/taverns? Should I get it from the staff?
Does anyone have any suggestions to improve this?

OPTION TWO

Now I want to describe for you a second option.
In this option, as I register, I would use a new biometric technology. That is, I would place my finger, or palm, on the device and it would take a picture of it. It would then code the information into a number, and that number would be your account number. The system would then delete your fingerprint picture. So, you don't type in your personal information, just place your finger down, show proof of age to the agent, and the system would do the rest.

Again give a rating.
What do people think of this option? In what ways is it better than the first? How is it worse?

Ask what they think would happen if they lost their card, what would they do? What would happen when they re-enrolled (answer, system would recognize that the account was already created, as fingerprint will result in same account number, even though there is no record of print kept, and generate a new card with all the same limits and history).

Considering that everyone in the area who wants to play VLTs for this test will need a card, which option is the best one?
Would you make any changes to make it better?

How much involvement do they see on their part to make sure this is implemented smoothly? Will players be coming to them, or does there have to be a separate person in the bar?

5. Conclusion

Thank participants. Again reassure them of the confidentiality of their responses.